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101538Z Sep 01

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	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	CAEX-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00
	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/011W

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9677
INFO NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 002666

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JENDAYI FRAZER
LONDON FOR GURNEY
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E.O. 12958: DECL. 09/10/11

TAGS: [PGOV PHUM ZI](#)

SUBJECT: BULAWAYO MAYORAL VOTE AND MAKONI WEST BY-ELECTION MARRED
BY IRREGULARITIES

CLASSIFIED BY POLITICAL SECTION CHIEF MATT HARRINGTON. REASONS:
1.5 (B) AND (D).

REF: HARARE 2642

SUMMARY

1. (C) THE SEPTEMBER 8-9 BULAWAYO MAYORAL ELECTION AND PARLIAMENTARY BY-ELECTION IN MAKONI WEST WERE MARRED BY MISSION-OBSERVED IRREGULARITIES, WHICH WOULD LEAD US TO CHARACTERIZE THEM RESPECTIVELY AS "FLAWED" AND "NOT FREE AND FAIR." IN BULAWAYO, LARGE NUMBERS OF VOTERS WERE TURNED AWAY FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, AND THE USE OF A LARGE SUPPLEMENTARY VOTERS ROLL WHICH HAD NOT BEEN MADE AVAILABLE IN ADVANCE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION RAISED CONCERNS IN THE MINDS OF OBSERVERS. IN MID-AFTERNOON ON SEPTEMBER 10, THE ZIMBABWE BROADCASTING CORPORATION ANNOUNCED THAT THE MDC HAD WON ALL SEVEN CITY COUNCIL SEATS, BUT WE DO NOT EXPECT ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE MAYORAL RESULT UNTIL LATER ON SEPTEMBER 10 OR EARLY ON SEPTEMBER 11. IN MAKONI WEST, VOTING WAS MOSTLY PEACEFUL ALTHOUGH 3,000 FEWER VOTES WERE CAST THAN IN THE JUNE 2000 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION. WE OBSERVED THAT SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF VOTERS WERE TURNED AWAY AT POLLING STATIONS, AND GOZ AND/OR ZANU-PF OFFICIALS TRAVELLED FREELY IN THE CONSTITUENCY, GIVING ORDERS TO POLICE OFFICERS AND OTHER RELEVANT ELECTORAL OFFICIALS AT POLLING STATIONS. THE FINAL RESULTS LIKELY WILL BE ANNOUNCED BY SEPTEMBER 11. IN MAKONI WEST, WE DISCERNED AN EMERGING GOZ STRATEGY TO TRY TO CONTROL THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS BY TELLING DIPLOMATS NO ACCREDITATION WAS REQUIRED WHILE INSTRUCTING RELEVANT LOCAL OFFICIALS NOT TO SHARE INFORMATION WITHOUT PROOF OF ACCREDITATION. END SUMMARY.

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BULAWAYO

2. (C) THE MAYORAL ELECTION IN BULAWAYO SEPTEMBER 8-9 WAS MOSTLY PEACEFUL, BUT WAS MARRED BY A NUMBER OF IRREGULARITIES, OBSERVED FIRST-HAND BY EMBASSY OFFICERS. AS THE SECOND DAY OF VOTING DREW TO AN END, ONLY 16 PERCENT OF REGISTERED VOTERS HAD CAST THEIR BALLOTS, IN CONTRAST TO 46 PERCENT IN THE JUNE 2000 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION (60,000 VERSUS 170,000, OUT OF A TOTAL OF 369,294 REGISTERED VOTERS). IT IS DIFFICULT TO DRAW ANY DEFINITIVE CONCLUSIONS FROM THE LOW TURNOUT FIGURES, AS ZIMBABWEANS RARELY TURN UP IN LARGE NUMBERS TO VOTE IN LOCAL ELECTIONS. WE HAVE HEARD AN UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT, IN THE FIRST DIRECT ELECTION FOR BULAWAYO'S MAYOR IN THE MID-1990'S, ONLY FIVE PERCENT OF REGISTERED VOTERS CAST BALLOTS. ADDITIONAL FACTORS THIS TIME WERE LIKELY A WIDESPREAD EXPECTATION THAT THE OPPOSITION MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC) WOULD WIN HANDILY AND A RELUCTANCE TO RISK ONE'S SKIN TO VOTE IN A MAYORAL ELECTION. WE ALSO HAVE HEARD COMPLAINTS THAT THERE WERE TOO FEW POLLING STATIONS; THEY WERE FAR APART, MAKING ACCESS PROBLEMATIC FOR THOSE WITHOUT CARS. SHARI EPPEL, DIRECTOR OF THE BULAWAYO BRANCH OF THE RESPECTED HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION AMANI TRUST, TOLD US THAT GROUPS OF ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS WERE DROPPED THE WEEK PRIOR TO THE ELECTION IN SEVERAL

TOWNSHIPS, WHERE THEY SUBJECTED THE RESIDENTS TO THREATS OF VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION. WE ALSO HEARD REPORTS OF LARGE NUMBERS OF ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS BEING BUSED IN ON THE VOTING DAYS.

13. (C) WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM A VARIETY OF RELIABLE SOURCES REPORTS OF PROCEDURAL IRREGULARITIES IN BULAWAYO. A HIGH NUMBER OF VOTERS, FOR INSTANCE -- RANGING BETWEEN TEN AND FORTY PERCENT AT EACH POLLING STATION -- WERE TURNED AWAY, EITHER BECAUSE THEIR
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NAMES WERE NOT ON THE ROLL OR BECAUSE THEY WERE UNABLE TO PRESENT PROPER IDENTIFICATION. EMBASSY OFFICERS SPOKE WITH MANY PEOPLE WHO WERE NOT ALLOWED TO VOTE, A MAJORITY OF WHOM WERE MALES BETWEEN THE AGES OF 25 AND 45, A DEMOGRAPHIC WIDELY ASSUMED IN THIS REGION TO BE SYMPATHETIC TOWARDS THE MDC. WE ALSO HAVE HEARD TROUBLING ACCOUNTS OF VOTER ROLL MANIPULATION. BELINDA MUSANO, DEPUTY COORDINATOR OF THE ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK (ZESN), WHICH CONDUCTS THE DOMESTIC MONITORING EFFORT, TOLD POLITICAL SECTION CHIEF THAT A NUMBER OF RESIDENTS HAD CONFIRMED THEIR NAMES WERE ON THE VOTERS ROLL DURING THE PERIOD OF PUBLIC INSPECTION (JUNE 25-JULY 16), BUT ARRIVED ON VOTING DAY TO FIND THAT THEIR NAMES HAD BEEN REMOVED. MOST OF THE RESIDENTS IN THIS SITUATION WERE REPORTEDLY WHITE.

14. (C) IN ADDITION, A SUPPLEMENTARY VOTERS ROLL -- WHICH WAS NEVER MADE AVAILABLE IN ADVANCE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION -- WAS SEEN AT SOME POLLING STATIONS, AND, IN SOME INSTANCES, IT WAS THICKER THAN THE REGULAR ROLL. THERE ALSO WAS SIGNIFICANT CONFUSION ABOUT WHERE PEOPLE WERE SUPPOSED TO VOTE. MOST VOTERS BELIEVED THAT THEY COULD CAST THEIR BALLOTS ANYWHERE IN THE CONSTITUENCY IN WHICH THEY WERE REGISTERED, BUT WERE TOLD WHEN THEY SHOWED UP TO VOTE THAT THEY WERE REQUIRED TO VOTE IN THE WARD IN WHICH THEY WERE RESIDENT (A CONSTITUENCY COMPRISES SEVERAL WARDS). THIS REQUIREMENT WAS APPARENTLY IMPOSED BECAUSE SEVEN CITY COUNCIL

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9678
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SEATS -- REPRESENTING PARTICULAR WARDS -- WERE ON THE BALLOT BUT,
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BECAUSE OF A LACK OF PRE-ELECTION VOTER EDUCATION, VOTERS WERE NEVER INFORMED OF THIS REQUIREMENT DURING THE CAMPAIGN.

15. (C) ONE INCIDENT WHICH HAS GARNERED SIGNIFICANT PRESS ATTENTION WAS THE SEPTEMBER 9 ARREST IN BULAWAYO OF THREE BODYGUARDS OF MDC MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT DAVID COLTART. COLTART TOLD US THAT THE BODYGUARDS WERE ARRESTED AFTER VIDEOTAPING A LARGE BUS OFF-LOADING YOUNG MEN WITH SHAVED HEADS WHOM THEY BELIEVED TO BE TROUBLEMAKERS OR ILLEGAL VOTERS BROUGHT IN BY THE RULING PARTY. THE BODYGUARDS WERE DETAINED AND CHARGED WITH FIREARMS VIOLATIONS AFTER A SEARCH OF THEIR HOUSES TURNED UP 17 GUNS. COLTART INSISTED THAT HIS BODYGUARDS HAVE LICENSES FOR EACH OF THE FIREARMS, BUT THEY REMAINED IN DETENTION AS OF LATE AFTERNOON SEPTEMBER 10.

16. (C) IT IS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS HOW MUCH THE IRREGULARITIES AFFECTED THE ULTIMATE OUTCOME, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THEY WERE SERIOUS AND NUMEROUS ENOUGH TO JUSTIFY A DESCRIPTION OF THE ELECTION AS "FLAWED" AND RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TACTICS WE ARE LIKELY TO SEE EMPLOYED IN FUTURE BY-ELECTIONS AND THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION EXPECTED IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2002.

17. (U) SHORTLY BEFORE THIS CABLE WENT TO PRESS, THE ZIMBABWE BROADCASTING CORPORATION (ZBC) ANNOUNCED THAT THE MDC HAD WON ALL SEVEN OF THE CITY COUNCIL SEATS, REPORTEDLY BY A HANDY MARGIN. THE MAYORAL RESULT LIKELY WILL NOT BE ANNOUNCED UNTIL LATE SEPTEMBER 10 OR EARLY ON SEPTEMBER 11.

MAKONI WEST

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18. (C) AFTER A PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN MAKONI WEST MARRED BY THE INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION WE HAVE COME TO EXPECT IN ZIMBABWEAN ELECTIONS (REFTEL) -- ALTHOUGH LESS INTENSE AND WIDESPREAD THAN IN THE LAST THREE BY-ELECTIONS IN BINDURA, BIKITA WEST, AND MARONDERA -- THE VOTING DAYS THEMSELVES SEPTEMBER 8-9 WERE MOSTLY PEACEFUL. VOTER TURNOUT WAS SLIGHTLY LOWER THAN IN THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION, AS THIS TIME 17,067 PEOPLE CAST BALLOTS (OUT OF A TOTAL OF 42,788 REGISTERED VOTERS), IN CONTRAST TO 20,279 IN JUNE 2000.

19. (C) U.S. EMBASSY OFFICERS OBSERVED THE VOTING, COORDINATING CLOSELY WITH OTHER DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS TO ENSURE THAT ALL 44 POLLING STATIONS RECEIVED A VISIT. SEVERAL INCIDENTS PROVIDED CAUSE FOR CONCERN. ON SEPTEMBER 8, POLITICAL SECTION CHIEF CAME ACROSS A GROUP OF 200-300 PEOPLE, MOST OF THEM MEN APPARENTLY UNDER THE AGE OF FORTY, WHO HAD BEEN TURNED AWAY, ALTHOUGH THEIR NAMES WERE ON THE VOTERS ROLL. THEY WERE TOLD THAT THEY NOW HAD TO VOTE IN THE CONSTITUENCY OF MUTARE WEST, EVEN THOUGH MOST HAD CAST BALLOTS IN JUNE 2000 AND EVEN THOUGH SOME OF THEIR NEIGHBORS HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO VOTE. AS FAR AS WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DETERMINE, THERE HAS BEEN NO NEW DEMARCATION OF MAKONI WEST SINCE THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION. WE DO NOT YET HAVE A GOOD SENSE OF WHETHER THIS WAS MORE THAN AN ISOLATED INCIDENT, BUT WE HAVE HEARD ANECDOTAL REPORTS OF SIMILAR PROBLEMS ELSEWHERE IN THE CONSTITUENCY. AT MOST OF THE POLLING STATIONS WE OBSERVED, MORE THAN TEN PERCENT OF VOTERS WERE TURNED AWAY EITHER BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT ON THE VOTERS ROLL OR BECAUSE THEY DID NOT PRESENT IDENTIFICATION SUFFICIENT TO SATISFY THE PRESIDING OFFICER. (N.B. WE ARE NOT CERTAIN WHETHER OR NOT THIS WAS DUE TO DELIBERATE GOVERNMENT ACTIONS OR POOR INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE VOTERS.) WHEN THE CHIEF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION'S HARARE-BASED ELECTION

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OBSERVATION UNIT SOUGHT AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE LOCAL REGISTRAR-GENERAL TO ASK ABOUT THIS AND OTHER ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES, THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL REFUSED TO MEET WITH HIM.

110. (C) IN A PATTERN CONSISTENT WITH THAT IN PAST BY-ELECTIONS, GOVERNMENT AND/OR ZANU-PF OFFICIALS WITHOUT ACCREDITATION MOVED UNHINDERED IN AND OUT OF POLLING STATIONS AND, IN SOME CASES, GAVE ORDERS TO THE POLICE OFFICERS ON-SITE. AT ONE POLLING STATION, MEN IN A VEHICLE WITH GOVERNMENT PLATES -- WHO DID NOT IDENTIFY THEMSELVES -- HARASSED THE DRIVER OF OUR EMBASSY VEHICLE, TELLING HIM WE SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN THERE. THEY TOLD THE DRIVER THAT, "IF YOU ALL (IN AN APPARENT REFERENCE TO INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS) INSIST ON CONTINUING TO OBSERVE, THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WILL BE TOUGHER." THE EFFECTS OF THE PRE-ELECTION VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION WERE CLEAR, AS EVERYONE -- THOSE WITH AN OFFICIAL ROLE RELATED TO THE VOTING AS WELL AS ORDINARY VOTERS -- WERE CLEARLY UNCOMFORTABLE TALKING TO US. AT ONE POLLING STATION, A WELL-DRESSED MAN CAME UP TO US, IDENTIFIED HIMSELF IN A FURTIVE WHISPER AS AN MDC OFFICIAL, AND SAID HE HAD BEEN SENT FROM HARARE TO OBSERVE THE CONDUCT OF THE ELECTION.

111. (C) GIVEN THE TENSE PRE-ELECTION ATMOSPHERE AND THE ELECTION-DAY IRREGULARITIES NOTED ABOVE, IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT SOME RESIDENTS FELT COMFORTABLE ABOUT VOTING AND THUS STAYED AWAY FROM

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THE POLLS. WE CANNOT, THEREFORE, CHARACTERIZE THE MAKONI WEST
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VOTE AS "FREE AND FAIR." WE DO NOT EXPECT THE FINAL RESULT TO BE
ANNOUNCED UNTIL LATE IN THE DAY ON SEPTEMBER 10 OR SOMETIME ON
SEPTEMBER 11.

COMMENT

12. (C) IN MAKONI WEST, WE OBSERVED WHAT APPEARS TO BE AN
EMERGING STRATEGY ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT TO CONTROL THE
ABILITY OF INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS TO OBSERVE ALL ASPECTS OF THE
ELECTORAL PROCESS. THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAS REPEATEDLY
TOLD DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS THAT THEY DO NOT REQUIRE ACCREDITATION TO
OBSERVE BY-ELECTIONS, BUT, DESPITE NUMEROUS REQUESTS, HAS REFUSED
TO PROVIDE WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION TO THAT EFFECT, WHICH CAN BE USED
OUTSIDE OF HARARE AND OTHER URBANIZED AREAS. IN MAKONI WEST, FOR
EXAMPLE, THE PRESIDING OFFICERS AT EACH POLLING STATION REFUSED
EVEN TO SPEAK TO US WITHOUT "OFFICIAL" GOZ ACCREDITATION AND, IN
SOME CASES, REFUSED TO ALLOW CONTACT BETWEEN US AND THE PARTY
POLLING AGENTS. IN PAST BY-ELECTIONS, POLICE OFFICERS OFTEN WERE
WILLING TO SHARE WITH US THEIR ASSESSMENTS OF THE DAY'S VOTING
BUT, THIS TIME, THE POLICE AT EACH POLLING STATION SIMPLY REFERRED
US TO THE PRESIDING OFFICER. MOST OF THE LOCAL OFFICIALS SEEMED
TO HAVE A CLEAR SET OF INSTRUCTIONS. OUR SENSE IS THAT WE MAY
HAVE A FUTURE PROBLEM WHEREIN THE RELEVANT GOZ AUTHORITIES IN
HARARE CONTINUE TO TELL US WE DO NOT NEED ACCREDITATION, WHILE
LOCAL OFFICIALS ARE INSTRUCTED NOT TO SHARE INFORMATION WITH US
UNLESS WE ARE ACCREDITED, A CLASSIC CATCH-22.

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